

## THE STORY OF A WHALE SANCTUARY

Humpback whales, or koholā as they are called in Hawaiian language, are honored in chants and legends. The first whaling ships that appeared in waters off Maui in the mid-nineteenth century did not immediately target the humpbacks. The most extensive whaling for humpbacks took place, however, during the first half of the 20th century in their high-latitude summer feeding grounds. By the 1960's, when the North Pacific humpbacks first received international protection, there were estimated to be only 1000 animals remaining in the population. Today that number has increased to approximately 5000-6000. Through out the world, attitudes have slowly shifted reflecting concern for survival of these giant mammals.

The Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary is a new step in promoting the recovery of humpback whales. Established in 1997, the unique focus of the sanctuary is a prime breeding and calving area for humpback whales in approximately 1,400 square miles of ocean surrounding the main Hawaiian Islands. The sanctuary uses education and research to further understanding and cooperation in protecting the humpback whale and its Hawaiian habitat. The sanctuary, as part of the national marine sanctuaries system, provides opportunities for citizens and government to work collectively on caring for important cultural and biological ocean resources.



The mission of the Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary program is to protect the humpback whale and its habitat through education, research and interpretive enforcement.

### Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary

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NOAA and the  
State of Hawai'i -  
a Partnership for  
Protection

Mokulele Hwy.

**Visit us!**  
726 South Kihei Rd.  
Kihei, HI 96753

S. Kihei Rd.

Ohukai St.

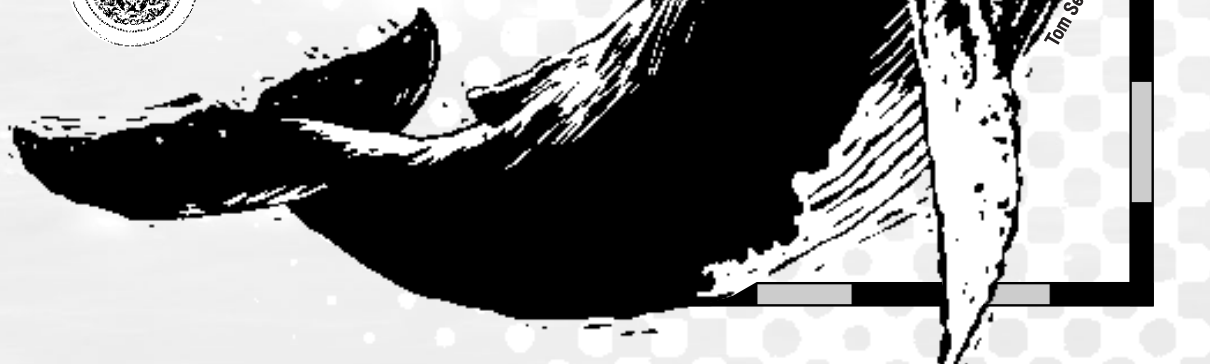
Fishpond  
Kalepolepo Park  
Menehune Stores

Piipani Hwy.

Kaonoulu St.

Kulanihakoi St.

Lipoa St.



HAWAIIAN ISLANDS

HUMPBACK WHALE

NATIONAL MARINE  
SANCTUARY

MAUI



## E KOMO MAI!

Welcome to the headquarters of the Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary. Come explore the beautiful natural setting and experience a “living classroom” with fascinating lessons in the history and ecology of humpback whales. Learn about these magnificent sea mammals from the perspective of both modern science and Hawaiian culture. Discover how a national marine sanctuary works to ensure a safe and healthy future for humpback whales in the North Pacific.



**“...the simple pleasures of nature watching continue year-round at the sanctuary headquarters.”**

## LOOK, MARVEL & LEARN

The expanse of water that sparkles beyond the Kīhei shoreline cradles an important humpback whale habitat. During winter, thousands of whales from the North Pacific congregate here to mate, give birth and care for their young. When the season is in full swing, the sanctuary headquarters offers a ringside seat for observing the acrobatics of humpback whales that swim close to shore. Signage along the shoreline provides information about other species that share Hawai‘i’s marine ecosystem. Discover a garden of native coastal plants as you stroll around the grounds. On the seaward side of the site, you’ll glimpse a ring of lava boulders; these are the stone wall remains of Kō‘ie‘ie Loko I‘a, an intricately constructed fishpond. Native Hawaiians used this fishpond many centuries ago to supply food to the local village. They not only depended on the marine environment for every day needs but also fostered a spiritual connection between man, sea and the land. The sanctuary honors this heritage by encouraging these traditions of ocean stewardship.

Visit the Education Center and discover colorful displays depicting both the scientific and cultural significance of whales and other marine resources. You’ll also find a

library of books and videos on ocean topics, free brochures and materials for children, and a corps of dedicated

volunteers, well-versed in whale facts and legends. Free guest lectures on a variety of marine topics are featured monthly.

## GET TO KNOW THE HUMPBAC

Humpback whales are mammals. Warm-blooded and air breathing, they share many human traits, yet they are so unlike us in their ability to survive as full-time inhabitants of the vast ocean. They appear to be the most athletic of the large whales, practicing a repertoire of fin and tail slaps, movements that may be a way of communicating with one another. They travel

vast distances between their foraging and their breeding grounds guided, perhaps, by cues of temperature, ocean currents, light and the earth’s magnetic field.

Humpbacks, so-named for the hunched appearance they display when they dive, are best known for their haunting songs. Researchers theorize that these long and complex vocalizations could be a

part of courtship activity.

This is one of many puzzles that researchers are investigating in an effort to better understand these legendary monarchs of the ocean.



**Admission and parking are FREE!**  
**The Education Center is open weekdays, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.**

